to hear me. If I left, there would be a great disappointment which would hurt the party. But I did not mean it—did **I?**

I assured them that I was in dead earnest. I would stay and speak only on condition that I should feel at perfect liberty to express my convictions straightforwardly and impressively.

They looked at one another as if in great doubt what to do, and then, after a whispered consultation, told me that, of course if I insisted, they must let me have my way; but they begged me to " draw it mild." I replied that I could not promise to " draw it mild/' but that I believed they were mistaken in thinking that their people, if properly told the truth, would favor the rascally policy of repudiation. They shook their heads and sighed and " hoped there would be no row.[59]

The meeting was very large, mostly plain country people, men and women. The committee-men sat on the platform on both sides of me, with anxious faces, evidently doubtful of what would happen. I had put the audience in sympathetic temper when in due order of my speech I reached the bond question. Then I did not "draw it mild." I described the circumstances under which the bonds were sold by our Government and bought by our creditors; the rebellion at the height of its strength; our armies in the field suffering defeat after defeat; our regular revenues sadly insufficient to cover the expenses of the war; our credit at a low ebb; a gloomy

cloud of uncertainty hanging over our future. These were the circumstances under which our Government called upon our own citizens and upon the world abroad for loans of money. Those whom we then called bondholders, lent their money upon our promise that it would be paid back in coin. They did so at a great risk, for if we had failed in the war, they might have lost all or much of what they had lent us. Largely owing to the help they gave us in our extremity, we